

Officer Involved Shooting of Redel Jones
Los Angeles Police Department

Officer Brett Ramirez, #41223

J.S.I.D. File #15-0416



JACKIE LACEY

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

May 1, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: COMMANDER ROBERT A. LOPEZ
 Los Angeles Police Department
 Force Investigation Division
 100 West First Street, Suite 431
 Los Angeles, California 90012

FROM: JUSTICE SYSTEM INTEGRITY DIVISION
 Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: Officer Involved Shooting of Redel Jones
 J.S.I.D. File #15-0416
 F.I.D. File #F067-15

DATE: May 1, 2017

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the August 12, 2015, fatal shooting of Redel Jones by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officer Brett Ramirez. It is our conclusion that Officer Ramirez acted in lawful self-defense at the time he fired his weapon. We further find that Officer Ramirez used reasonable force to apprehend an armed, dangerous fleeing felon.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on August 12, 2015, at approximately 2:45 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the location. They were given a briefing and walk-through of the scene by LAPD Lieutenant Brian Gilman.

The following analysis is based on reports, recorded interviews, video recordings, and photographs submitted to this office by the LAPD's Force Investigation Division (FID), as well as an interview with Courtyana conducted by this office. The departmentally compelled statement of Officer Ramirez was considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On August 12, 2015, at approximately 1:45 p.m., LAPD Communications Division broadcast a radio call of a robbery that had just occurred at Stocker Pharmacy located on Santa Rosalia Drive in LAPD's Southwest Division. Uniformed patrol Officers Adam Graley and Jared Timmons responded to the location. After meeting with the victim and verifying the circumstances of the robbery, Timmons broadcast, "...Suspect was wearing a purple scarf on her head. Suspect is a female black, five five, five six, wearing oversize shirt, beige in color, baggy pants. Weapon used was a one-foot long kitchen knife, property taken was approximately 80 dollars US currency in twenties, fives and ones."

Uniformed patrol Officers Brett Ramirez and Alonzo Iniguez were working in a marked black and white vehicle. Ramirez was the driver and Iniguez was seated in the right front passenger's seat. The officers responded to the area of the robbery to search for the suspect. While looking for the suspect, they traveled north on Marlton Avenue. Uniformed patrol Officers Andrew Carpenter and Kenneth Hughes also proceeded northbound on Marlton Avenue, just ahead of Ramirez and Iniguez.

Carpenter and Hughes drove through the intersection of Marlton Avenue and Santo Tomas Drive. As they passed the intersection, Hughes saw a woman, later identified as Redel Jones, walking westbound on the north side of Santo Tomas Drive. Jones was wearing baggie clothing and a purple scarf on her head. Hughes communicated his observations to Carpenter. Carpenter made a U-turn after clearing the intersection, drove south on Marlton, and turned west on Santo Tomas Drive.

As Carpenter and Hughes traveled north on Marlton Avenue past Santo Tomas Drive, Ramirez and Iniguez turned west on Santo Tomas Drive and saw Jones walking westbound on the north sidewalk. A man was initially walking with her, but turned and proceeded eastbound when the officers got closer to them. The officers approached Jones, believing she fit the description of the robbery suspect. [REDACTED] Jones briefly looked in the officers' direction and continued to walk westbound, away from the officers. Jones turned north in a north-south alley between Marlton Avenue and Somerset Drive.¹ The officers followed.

Jones walked north in the alley, proceeding downhill. The officers trailed several feet behind. From the driver's seat, Ramirez ordered Jones to "Stop!" Jones did not stop and increased her pace, [REDACTED] The officers stopped their car, exited the vehicle, and proceeded after Jones on foot. Jones reached into her waistband and pulled out a large knife.² Ramirez broadcast, "She's got a knife in hand! She's running!"³ Carpenter and Hughes saw Ramirez and Iniguez' police vehicle at the mouth of the alley. They parked their vehicle north of Ramirez and Iniguez' patrol car, exited, and ran north in the alley to assist Ramirez and Iniguez. Hughes was armed with his department-issued Taser.

As the officers ran, they ordered Jones to "Stop!," "Get on the ground!" and "Drop the knife!" Jones ran just past a pick-up truck that was parked on the west side of the alley, stopped abruptly, turned, and faced Ramirez, who was uphill from her position. Jones raised the knife and pointed it at Ramirez.⁴ Jones took [REDACTED] steps toward Ramirez and "charge[d]" at him. [REDACTED] Ramirez fired five rounds from his duty weapon at Jones.⁵ Nearly simultaneously, Hughes, who was behind and to the left of

¹ This alley is graded downhill while traveling north.

² [REDACTED]

³ This broadcast occurred at 2:00:27 p.m. [REDACTED]

⁴ Jones held the knife in her right hand with her elbow bent so the knife was level with her head. Iniguez described it as an "I'm going to stab you position."

⁵ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ramirez, discharged his Taser at Jones, missing her.⁶ Jones fell forward, dropping the knife near her body as she fell. Ramirez immediately kicked the knife away from Jones.

Paramedics were called and arrived at the scene. They pronounced Jones dead at 2:18 p.m.

On August 13, 2015, Deputy Medical Examiner Keng-Chih Su, M.D., performed an autopsy on Jones' body. Jones suffered four gunshot wounds, three of which Dr. Su determined were fatal. The first fatal gunshot wound was to the left neck.⁷ The direction of this wound was downward and slightly front to back. A second fatal gunshot wound was to the left lateral arm. The projectile entered the left lateral arm, exited the axillary fossa, and reentered the axillary fossa. The direction of this wound was left to right and downward. The third fatal gunshot wound was to the left chest. The direction of the wound was downward, front to back, and slightly left to right. The final, non-fatal wound was to the right chest. The direction of this wound was downward, front to back, and left to right.⁸ Dr. Su ascribed the cause of death as multiple gunshot wounds.

Jones was armed with a 13-inch black handled knife with an eight-inch blade. Investigators recovered the knife near Jones' body. Investigators also found a handwritten note under Jones' body. The note read in part, "I have a gun[.] Give me all the money in the register[.]" A total of \$110 in US currency was recovered from Jones' left front pants pocket. That money included three \$20 bills, eight \$5 bills, and ten \$1 bills.



Knife and robbery note found at the scene.

Ramirez was armed with his department-issued 9mm Glock Model 17 semiautomatic pistol. Ramirez kept his duty weapon loaded with 18 total rounds. After the incident, his firearm contained 13 live rounds. Five 9mm cartridge casings were recovered at the scene close to

██████ Iniguez estimated that Jones was approximately five to six feet from Ramirez at the time he fired. Carpenter thought the distance was three feet.

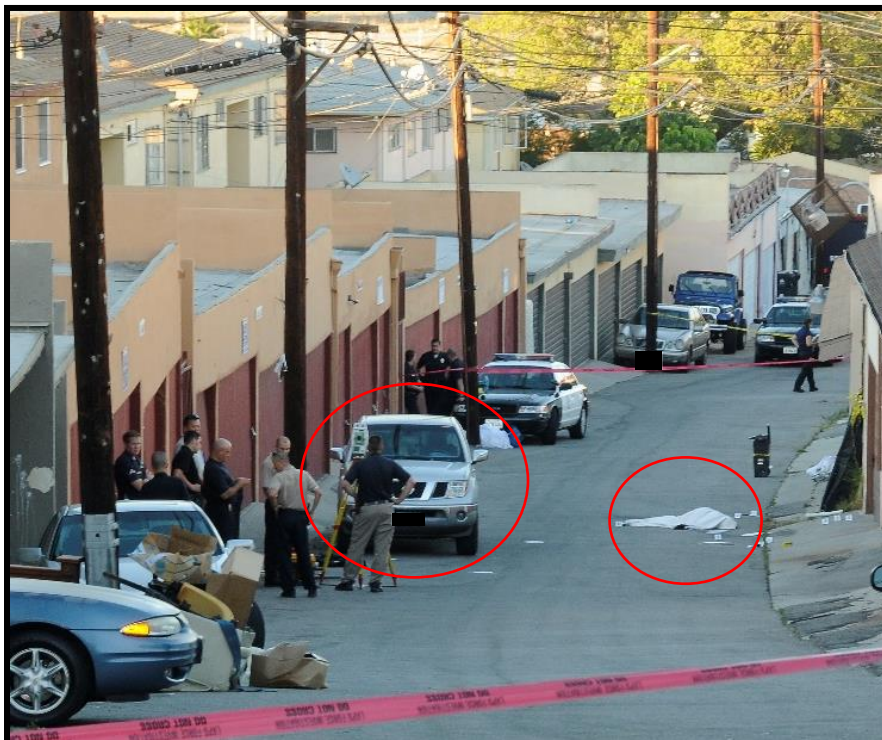
⁶ The information downloaded from the Taser showed it was deployed at 2:00:52 p.m.

⁷ The numbering of the gunshot wounds does not represent the chronological order in which the wounds were received.

⁸ The downward angle of the gunshot wounds is consistent with Jones and Ramirez' relative positioning. Jones stood downhill relative to Ramirez. Moreover, Ramirez is 5'6" tall compared to Jones, who was 5'1" tall.

Jones' body. The investigation concluded that those casings had been fired from Ramirez' duty weapon.

Luis was seated in his pick-up truck facing southbound in the alley when he saw Jones running towards his location with four or five officers pursuing her.⁹ Jones held a twelve-inch knife in her hand as she ran. The officers yelled for Jones to "Stop!" Jones ran past him, turned, and raised the knife with the blade pointing outward. Seconds later, Luis heard four consecutive gunshots. Luis was looking forward at the time he heard the gunshots and did not see what occurred at that time.¹⁰



Luis' car relative to Jones' body.

Thomas had just parked his car facing north in the alley when he saw Jones and three policemen walking north in the alley. Thomas noted the officers had their weapons drawn, but was not initially sure if the officers were holding handguns or Tasers. After approximately 20 feet, they began running. Thomas explained, "...they got maybe 50 yards down the alley. Then they stopped. And I saw this one individual pull a knife out and advance towards the police, and they shot [her]." Thomas indicated the knife was "maybe 12 inches long" and Jones held the knife near her head as she moved toward the police. At that time, the police officers fired at her and Jones fell face down. Thomas believed all three officers discharged their weapons.¹¹

⁹ Due to privacy concerns, all civilian witnesses are identified by their first names only.

¹⁰ Luis was parked almost adjacent to the incident.

¹¹ Thomas' position was south of the incident. He was facing north while watching what occurred.



DICVS photo showing Thomas' car and Luis' car at the time of the incident.

An August 13, 2015 Los Angeles Times' article identified Courtyana as a witness to the incident. The article indicated Courtyana watched the incident from the rearview mirror of her car. Courtyana is quoted as saying, "I do know for a fact that she was not charging at them." FID investigators contacted Courtyana, who initially agreed to provide LAPD with a statement. Prior to being interviewed, a lawyer representing Courtyana contacted LAPD to tell them she advised her client not to speak with LAPD.

Courtyana agreed to speak with members of this office. On March 20, 2017, she was interviewed regarding this matter in the presence of her attorneys. Courtyana was parked in her car on the east side of the alley facing north.¹² Courtyana was seated in the driver's seat when she heard screaming in the alley behind her. Because she was positioned north of the incident location, she looked in her rear view and driver's side car mirrors and saw officers chasing after a suspect. Courtyana was unable to see if the suspect was a man or a woman, but later learned the suspect was a woman. Courtyana described the suspect as African American, wearing baggy clothing and a charcoal colored hood. Courtyana believed there were three officers, but she focused her attention on the officer who was holding a gun.¹³ Courtyana's cousin, who was seated in Courtyana's car, exited the car and ran into the courtyard of her apartment complex. Courtyana heard the officer with the gun yell, "Stop running!"

Courtyana watched the incident via her driver's side mirror. Courtyana described the suspect as approximately five feet ahead and slightly to the right of the officer holding the gun. Courtyana noticed the suspect's hands and indicated that the suspect was not holding anything.¹⁴ After about 15 seconds, the suspect stopped, but the officers did not stop. The officer fired his gun five times at the suspects' left side of her back.¹⁵ At the time the officer fired his duty weapon,

¹² Courtyana did not recall any other car being in the alley at the time of the officer involved shooting.

¹³ Both Iniguez and Ramirez drew their duty weapons during this incident. Hughes was armed with a Taser. Courtyana did not recall seeing anyone other than Ramirez with a weapon.

¹⁴ At no time did Courtyana see a knife or a Taser.

¹⁵ News footage of an interview with Courtyana documented that she initially said the officer fired three times.

both the suspect and the officer were facing north. From her position, Courtyana could see the front of the suspect's body. Courtyana indicated the suspect never turned to face the officers. The suspect fell face first onto the ground. Courtyana did not see a muzzle flash.

Courtyana exited her car and went into the apartment courtyard. After approximately one minute, she came back to her car. A female officer approached Courtyana, told her that they were going to close the alley, and asked Courtyana if she was going to leave. The officer did not ask Courtyana if she had witnessed the incident. Courtyana left with her cousin. When Courtyana returned later that day, the media was set up in the area and Courtyana spoke to them.

The officers' cars were equipped with digital in car video systems (DICVS). After the incident, Iniguez activated his patrol vehicle's DICVS. This activation caused the system to record one minute prior to the activation and visually captured the time period including the officer involved shooting. However, the view from Ramirez and Iniguez' vehicle's camera was partially obstructed by Carpenter and Hughes' patrol vehicle. As such, the officer involved shooting was not captured. Carpenter and Hughes' DICVS was not activated until after the incident and did not capture the time period in question.

The investigation determined that Jones entered Stocker Pharmacy at 1:36 p.m. Jones walked to the refrigerator, selected a drink, and walked to the front counter. The cashier told Jones the drink cost \$.75 and Jones handed a single dollar bill to the cashier. As the cashier was looking at the register, Jones placed a piece of paper on the counter. The cashier began to hand Jones her change, looked at the paper, and read the line that stated, "I have a gun." The cashier believed that she was being robbed and did not read the rest of the note. At that time, Jones produced a large knife, pointed it at the cashier, and said, "Don't push any buttons." The cashier reached into the register and grabbed approximately three \$20 bills, and several \$5 and \$1 bills, and placed the money in a brown paper bag. The cashier handed the money to Jones, who walked out of the pharmacy with the bag of money.¹⁶



Jones holding the knife during the robbery

¹⁶ The robbery was recorded by the pharmacy's security system.

Jones was 30 years old, weighed 141 pounds, and was 5'1" tall. According to a relative, Jones suffered from bi-polar disorder and had been prescribed Seroquel. Jones' blood tested negative for the presence of Seroquel.

CONCLUSION

"The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than the 20/20 vision of hindsight... The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." Graham v. Connor (1989) 490 U.S. 386, 396-397.

Actual danger is not necessary to justify the use of deadly force in self-defense. If one is confronted by the appearance of danger which one believes, and a reasonable person in the same position would believe, would result in death or great bodily injury, one may act upon those circumstances. The right of self-defense is the same whether the danger is real or merely apparent. People v. Toledo (1948) 85 Cal.App.2d 577.

According to the law in California, a person acted in lawful self-defense if (1) he reasonably believed that he was in imminent danger of being killed or suffering great bodily injury; (2) he reasonably believed that the immediate use of deadly force was necessary to defend against that danger; and (3) he used no more force than was reasonably necessary to defend against that danger. CALCRIM No. 505. The People have the burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that a person did not act in lawful self-defense or defense of another. If the People fail to meet this burden, a jury must find the defendant not guilty. CALCRIM No. 3470.

Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance. Penal Code section 835a. California law permits the use of deadly force by police officers when necessary to affect the arrest of a person who has committed a forcible and atrocious felony which threatens death or serious bodily harm. People v. Ceballos (1974) 12 Cal.3d 470, 477-484. Forcible and atrocious crimes are those crimes whose character and manner reasonably create a fear of death or serious bodily injury. Ceballos, supra, 12 Cal.3d at 479.

The evidence examined in this investigation shows that Officers Ramirez and Iniguez responded to an armed robbery call and located Jones, who fit the description of the perpetrator. The officers attempted to contact her, but Jones walked away from them and turned into an alley. The officers followed and continued to order her to "Stop!" Jones did not stop and increased her speed as she fled downhill in the alley. The officers exited their patrol vehicle and began to follow Jones on foot.

According to the officers, Thomas and Luis, Jones was holding a large knife as she fled the officers. The officers and Thomas stated Jones turned and advanced toward Ramirez just prior to

Ramirez firing his weapon. Luis saw Jones turn to face the officer and raise the knife. However, Luis turned and looked south immediately after seeing Jones turn and raise the knife and did not witness the officer involved shooting. Courtyana indicated Jones did not turn to face the officer and was not holding anything at the time the officer fired his weapon. All witnesses place Jones and Ramirez in close proximity to each other.

While there is a conflict between the witnesses' opinions as to what occurred just prior to the officer involved shooting, we find the overall evidence is sufficient to conclude Jones was armed with a knife, turned, and advanced toward Ramirez just prior to Ramirez firing his weapon. As Ramirez ran down the alley, he broadcast "She's got a knife in hand! She's running!" A large knife and a robbery note were found close to Jones' body just after the incident. Video footage taken from the robbery committed 25 minutes earlier depicts Jones holding a large knife. The knife in the video appears to be the same knife as recovered at the scene. Moreover, the recording of the robbery shows Jones holding the knife in her right hand, near her shoulder, with the blade pointing out. This depiction is consistent with the description of how Jones held the knife just prior to Ramirez firing his weapon.

Luis was very close to the incident and in a good position to see, as was Thomas. Their statements corroborate the officers' description of the events. Courtyana viewed the officer involved shooting via the side mirror of her car. From her vantage point, Courtyana was unable to determine if Jones was a man or a woman, which arguably demonstrates that she did not have a good view of the incident. Courtyana further stated Ramirez fired at Jones' left side of her back and Jones fell forward immediately. However, the location and direction of the gunshot wounds are inconsistent with Courtyana's description of the incident.

Jones suffered four gunshot wounds. The gunshot wounds to her left and right chest clearly entered the front of her body and traveled through her body front to back and left to right. The direction of travel of the wound to her left neck is also front to back, while the wound to her left arm traveled left to right. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] However, Courtyana stated the officer shot Jones on the left side of her back. The location of two gunshot wounds to the front of her body is directly contradictory to Courtyana's recall of the event, as is the front to back direction of travel of three of the gunshot wounds. As such, the physical evidences belies Courtyana's assertion that Ramirez shot Jones in the back and weakens the evidentiary weight of her statement.

Based on the evidence presented, we determine Jones did remove a large knife and hold it in her hand as she attempted to avoid contact with the officers. Jones stopped abruptly, turned, and faced Ramirez. Jones raised the knife in an "I'm going to stab you position" and "charged" at Ramirez. Ramirez stood in very close proximity to Jones, and, facing deadly force, [REDACTED] Ramirez responded with deadly force, firing his duty weapon at Jones.

We conclude that Officer Brett Ramirez was placed in reasonable fear for his life by Redel Jones' actions and he acted in lawful self-defense at the time he fired his duty weapon. We further find that Officer Ramirez used reasonable force in the apprehension of Jones, who had

committed an armed robbery, was fleeing from the officers, was armed with a deadly weapon, and actively resisting arrest. We are closing our file and will take no further action in this matter.